



When The World Gets In The Way - Part 6
Worldly Sensibilities & Godly Zeal
Pastor Mike Fabarez

Luke 14:34-35

Well the company that installed the pavers around my house, you know what pavers are? Those little interlocking brick hardscape stuff. They have guaranteed their work for life. Which is a good thing because lately I've had a lot of problems with the pavers around my house. So, it's okay, because they're going to, you know, they promised to come out to fix it all for free. So, this week on my off day I recovered the paperwork and I gave them a call. Correction, I tried to give them a call. Because when I called them I realized within a matter of time, that they no longer exist. The people all exist, I mean the workers exist, the foreman, the office manager, the owner, they are all existing but the company has disbanded. The founder worked for other places, they've started new companies, I'm assuming they're issuing new promises to people. But when it comes to the work they promised to do on my yard, they're not going to do it. (01:30)

Now that's maddening, that's frustrating. It's frustrating when you need something, you rely on a promise and then it's not even worth the paper it's printed on. It's frustrating. (01:40)

As we come to the end of Luke chapter 14 in the last two verses of this chapter, Jesus talks about this frustration. It's a frustration not about us, not the frustration that we have I should say when people break their promises toward us, it's a passage about His frustration. The frustration he has when people like you and me, say to him, "I'll follow you." And then down the road, like the world, we revert to living for ourselves. (02:11)

This passage is just a very simple illustration, an illustration of salt. Now that illustration in Luke chapter 14 verses 34 and 35 is supposed to wake us up to what's at stake when we say to Christ, "I'll follow you." And then something gets in the way. It is a wakeup call. We need to understand what's at stake when we say we'll follow Him and then we don't. We need to recognize what causes that and we certainly need to realize what's at stake for us in terms of the pain and heartache we will experience and more importantly the pain and frustration that Christ experiences. So, take a look at this passage with me as we finish this series of sermons in Luke chapter 14 that has lead us to make a comparison between the world, it's values and the things that God expects from His people. (02:59)

Simple illustration starting in verse 34. Jesus begins with these words, "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Simple, salt is good, but if salt lost its taste, well, it can't be made salty again. How is it going to be restored, it's of no use, you throw it out, it's not good for the soil, not good for the manure pile, it's thrown away. And then he gives that very familiar phrase that he uses frequently throughout his ministry. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. You need to ponder this. (03:41)

Now of course that makes sense given the context of this particular illustration because by itself it would be hard to know what in the world we're talking about. But he's just come off of verses 25 through 33 telling people what it means to be a follower of Christ. Saying you really need to count the cost. You need to sit down and evaluate whether you even know what you're doing when you amass yourself as they were in verse 25. Crowds coming around Christ saying, "I want to sign up to be on your team." You better think that through. You better be careful about what it means in your mind to follow me because I have some very clear expectations of you, there's a lot of things that will rival your loyalty to me, you need to make sure you understand what it means to be a follower of me. (04:21)

Salt is good. Salt, it's a good illustration for this because salt is something that when it's there you know it. And when it's absent you know it. I mean an avocado is good when you cut it open, slice it in half and lay it there. You take your spoon out. But it's a whole lot better with salt on it, isn't it? Or that mashed potatoes, that big mound of mashed potatoes, it's good but it's a whole lot better with salt. You know when the salt is there and you know when it's not. (04:46)

And speaking of salt, and as long as we're salivating, let's talk about popcorn. I mean popcorn is good, but it's a



whole lot better with salt. You need a little oil to make that salt stick to that popcorn so you've got to have that and when it's not there it's just not the same. And that's the thing, salt is something that is salty and it's only good when it's salty. It's like pouring sand on something if it's not salty because it's got to be there making a difference. You have to know that it's there. And clearly when he calls people to follow him, that's the point he often makes when he enlists the illustrations of salt. You know it's there, it's like light he says in the Sermon on the Mount. You don't light a lamp and then put a bucket over the top of it. You light a lamp so it can make a difference in the room and it can cast light into the room and that's the point. And salt is the same way. You pour it on your mashed potatoes because you want to taste it. And if it's not tasty it's not good. (05:36)

And so, it is for us. As we assemble to listen to the word of God taught. As we say I want to follow Christ and then we disperse. We go through our Monday to Friday life, we better be making a difference. We ought to be known in the places that we frequent through out the week as followers of Christ. You should be able to taste that, they should be able to see that, they should be able to hear that. They should know when a Christian is in their office. They should understand that a Christian works for this group, is in the neighborhood, that there's a parent on this little league team or this soccer team and that family, they're Christians. It ought to be evident when it's there. That's very important for us to recognize when it comes to following Christ. It is something I think we can summarize in the first point this way, in listing a word we started with at the beginning of this series for people that are not just going to be Christians in name only but they are zealous to do what God asks them to do. Let's just put it that way, number 1, we need to see that salt has this image of something that really is known, it's influential, it's zealous. We need to be zealous for Christ. (06:36)

1. Be Zealous for Christ

Be zealous for Christ and I mean this as you leave this building and you go back to the Monday through Friday life that you live, we need to be zealous for Christ. And zealots are always people that you know what they believe, you know what they're about, they're always talking about it, they're always recruiting people to their cause. Zealots are zealous and you know that they believe what they believe and they're about what they're about. That's what zealots are. That's a good word for us I suppose to describe what Jesus is expecting of us, to be zealous for him. To be zealous for good works. And that's a good place to start if you're going to make some sub-points under number one here, let's just talk about that because Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount he did illustrate salt and paired it with light and then he said, "Let your light so shine before men that people can see your good works." Let's just start with that. (07:21)

You need to have an influence of good behavior in your Monday through Friday life. People ought to be able to see that. The influence of your life is distinctive and it's in contrast to everyone else because you're going the extra mile, you're staying the extra hour, you're spending the extra dollar, as I like to put it, in doing good works. As a matter of fact, a good way to talk about it is to think about what God expects us to do among ourselves within the church and then saying, "You know what we're supposed to do that throughout the week as well." As Galatians says we need to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith. And when we talk about being good in the church and serving and encouraging and helping and running the errand and bringing the meal and being that servant. You need to take that same command, that same expectation and start to envision that in your Monday through Friday life. I mean you should use those words. I'm supposed to be an encourager, I'm supposed to be a servant, I'm supposed to help. (08:16)

Now when you go to your work week and you look at what you do all week long, you need to be known for that there. I assume if you're in a small group here at this church here, if someone in your small group has their spouse going into the hospital you start to say, "How can I help? Can I bring some meals? Can I carpool your kids to school? What can I do?" Now you need to take that mentality that we talk about within the walls of the church and say when I'm in my office do they know me at work as that distinctive person that is active about good deeds. Are you the first one to say, "I'll run that errand." Are you the one that they would expect, well there's that Christian there they are again and they're willing to bring that meal. They're able to right away see that we're Christians by the way we're willing to do good deeds. We need to start with that. (08:59)

To let your light shine before men so as they see your good deeds and hopefully our hope is they'll glorify God. Well that's good, I mean that's one good thing about Christians at least. I mean they're always seemingly there to help and encourage and assist and comfort. And by the way, you should see good works as the inverse too. It may



not be as well received by your coworkers or your neighbors or the other Soccer Moms. But you know there's things that you can't do. Our good works are defined not just by what we do but what we don't do. There should be things clearly, they recognize, well there's that Christian they're not going to laugh at this joke. They're not going to go to that place after work on Friday. I don't think they are going to do that deal, I don't think they're going to agree to that thing, I don't think they're going to sign that contract, I don't think they're going to be a part of this because, you know, they're Christians and I don't think they'll do that. Oh, I know we like to be cool and fit in and all that, but you've got to realize God wants you to be distinctive and have an influence of good works. Your unwillingness to participate with the crowd at your Monday through Friday life, the Bible says should have a restraining effect on the entire sphere of influence that you run in. You restrain it just by the fact that they know they're not going to do that, they're not going to laugh at this they don't think that's funny. (10:10)

Your good works are not just the positive things that people see you doing Monday through Friday but that you're not willing to engage in the things that they engage in, not to mention the things that we should be known for within the walls of the church. We love God, we pray to God, we read his word. I assume before you have a meal with your small group, you stop and you thank God for that. I just wondered do we bring those good works into the public square as well. Are you like Daniel, willing to throw the windows open, saying, "Yeah I pray, that's just what I do, I don't care if you see I or not." At the workroom at the office in the breakroom and time to eat lunch and I mean do you bring those good works into that arena? Things that we do here in the morning, break open our Bibles, read the Bible. Oh yeah, I didn't quite get around to thinking through what that passage meant, let me revisit that passage, well you would do that I suppose at some meeting at the church but would you break out your Bible in the breakroom at the office? I would think that's what Christians would do, they wouldn't hide that part of their lives. (11:09)

Now we started with something easy. I guess it would be good to be known as the person who would run an errand or help kids get to school or be someone that would bring a meal if someone were sick in your office. But now we're talking about things you won't do and things that you would seem to only want to do in environments that would be affirming but you know that's not going to be affirmed in that context, never the less, the influence of your deeds is something God expects from you in your Monday through Friday life. (11:35)

I said we should talk about making some sub-points here, certainly salt has an influence and it should influence people by the good deeds that we do. But to me a follower of Christ is not just to reflect his behavior, it's also to be echoing his words so let's put it this way, letter B if you're taking notes, just put it down like this, we need to have an influence through our truthful words. We should influence our environment Monday through Friday by our good deeds and we ought to influence people by our truthful words. (12:05)

When Jesus stood before Pilot he said, "You know for this reason I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth." That's what I'm all about, because they're asking about the truth, that's what I'm all about. I'm all about the truth. And when I have an opportunity I'm going to speak the truth. And he says in John, you know what? Satan is all about lying. I'm all about the truth. And if there's an opportunity to speak up on an issue, I'm going to tell you the truth about that issue. You know I need to follow Christ, I can't leave my nets behind on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and get up and physically walk after Christ but I should be following Christ as every generation has been able to and that is by reflecting his behavior in my Monday through Friday life and by speaking truthful words I follow Christ in bearing witness to the truth. (12:47)

Now there's lots of opportunities throughout the week for you to speak up for the truth. There are issues discussed in the news every day. There are issues in our culture that continue to bash up against the affirmations of Christianity. You have an opportunity to speak up on those things. You've got an opportunity when they're bashing something for instance something as fundamental as we dealt with this week, as the reliability of the Bible. You have an opportunity to speak up on that. No, no, no, let me correct you on that. Here's the truth about that matter. Whether it's about the issue of the sanctity of life, on the pre-natal or the end-of-life, euthanasia, it's time to stand up and to speak up for the sanctity of life in any conversation in the break room in your office. When you're sitting in the bleachers where your kids are playing little league and the topic comes up, hey I'm going to bear witness, I'm going to follow Christ by bearing witness to the truth. You need to be bold enough to do that. That's the influence of speaking truthful words. (13:45)

Truth itself, people today have a very moldable view of truth. One of the most helpful things Christians in our



generation can do is just sit there and be people that bear witness to something called absolute truth. That there is a truth that cannot be bent, it's not situational, it does not change. Society can't define it, there is something beyond a constitution, something beyond Supreme Court Justices, something beyond just what the population wants to vote for. It's called absolute truth. We just need to stand up for that. You if you're going to follow Christ, should bear witness to the truth. That's why Jesus came to the world, one of the stated reasons for him coming and it should be the thing we follow him in. (14:23)

We should be influential like salt, they ought to know you're there by your deeds, they ought to know you're there by your speaking up for the truth, let's put this one here as a letter C just to round this first point out. It ought to be clear that you're making an influence by the fact that you're engaged in, let's put it this way, spiritual recruitment. Okay, you want to follow Christ and you follow Christ just like he told his first century followers to follow him. He said to Peter, James and John, "Leave your nets behind, follow me and I will make you, what?" Fishers of men. I have a mission for you. Here's your goal. Your goal in life is to, as he says at the end of the gospels, go into all the world and make disciples. So, at the beginning he commissions people who follow him, you are to collect people and engage people in this thing called Christianity. You go out there, collect them and make them my followers. It's how he starts in the gospels and it's how he ends the gospels. You want to follow me? Be fishers of men. You want to follow me? Make disciples. That's what zealots do by the way, isn't it? They're not just content speaking highly of what they believe in. They're not content, standing up for what they believe in. See zealots are people that want to get you to join their cause. Are you recruiting people spiritually in your Monday through Friday life? God says, "That's why I've sent you out there. I put you in these places to bear witness to the truth." And the ultimate truth is you've got to become a follower of Christ get right with the living God, there's no other way to come to the father except through him. You've got to spiritually recruit people for the cause of the kingdom. (16:00)

I avoid the word evangelism here not for any reason other than to wake us up to the reality of not just an act of saying something but seeing myself as an agent of recruiting people to the cause of Christ. That's going to make an influence. Take a look at a passage with me that may help us through this, round it out in an illustration. 2 Corinthians chapter 2. Call this passage up if you would, 2 Corinthians chapter 2, let's start in verse 14. The influence of spiritual recruiting. Do you think people will know you're there if you're known as a person that's trying to get people to follow Christ? Now I'm not talking about being an irritating, inappropriate employee at your place of work. I'm not saying, when it's time to, you know, it's a shareholders meeting and you're going to stand up and open your Bible and start preaching from John 3. I'm not asking you to be inappropriate. But I'm saying, just like you're known for good works, just like you're known, if that topic comes up with Phil in the room, he's going to be talking about the truth or at least what he believes the truth to be. They also know you as someone that's always any chance you get, trying to get people to engage Christ the way you've engaged Christ. To join in following Christ as you've joined and follow Christ. (17:10)

Drop down to verse 14, take a look at this passage with me. But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession comma, let's just stop with that phrase. Here is the Apostle Paul enlisting a military motif, a military motif of a triumphal procession. Triumph means we've gone to war and we've won the war. Now if you look at the first part of this you might think what a militaristic sense about Christianity. But you need to know this is not Islam, we're talking about Christianity here. This is not converts at the end of a sword. He's already made clear and will make clear repeatedly to the Corinthians the weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. We are engaging in battles of ideas. We're trying to tear down strongholds that raise themselves up against the knowledge of God. This is a battle of ideas so we're engaging in theological discussions, debates about what's true and what's not. As a matter of fact, that picture of being in this procession after going into a village or a town or a nation and conquering them and bringing back these captives in triumphal procession is made very clear that we're not talking military by the second half of this which sounds a lot like the flower children of the sixties. (18:24)

Here it comes. And through us spreads the fragrance and the knowledge of him, man, everywhere. Right? I mean if you've ever had a mixed metaphor here it is. We're coming with swords, we're coming with our shields and our armor and we're marching back and we've just conquered this foreign land. And look we've got the king and we've got the princes and they're all in our triumphal procession. They are our captives now. We've conquered people. And he says, "How do we conquer them?" We go in and we smelled really good man, right? We just spread the flavor of Christ everywhere. Now this helps us understand and it's a great illustration that we as Christians go in like salt and they can taste us there. Or in this, here's another sense. We go in and they can smell us there. They smell Christ in us. Or like the light under the bushel, no the light it's shining on them like it says in Ephesians it's as



though this light is shining and we're saying, "Oh sleeper arise from your sleep, let Christ shine on you." They can see it, they can hear it, they can taste it, they can smell it. That picture of us being influential in a place and we can't help it. We're there and they hear Christ. They hear about what we're all about. Keep reading. (19:42)

We are, he says, the aroma of Christ, ultimately – here's the ultimate thing, we're concerned about an audience of one – we are the aroma of Christ to God. That's what we want, we want to be faithful ambassadors of a message before God. Among those of course who we're talking to, those who are being saved, and you know a lot of people aren't, those who are perishing but we're still there to represent the gospel to the one where their fragrance from death to death but to the other, here's what the exciting part is, we're the fragrance of life to life. Now who is sufficient for these things? That we're ambassadors of Christ, it's amazing. We're not like so many peddlers of God's word, we're not out there trying to do this for our own advantage or our own gain, no, we're men of sincerity. We're sincerely pleading with this people as – here's a good word – as commissioned by God. It's how the disciples started, follow me I'll make you fishers of men. And the commission that ended, we call it the Great Commission. Go out and make disciples as commissioned by God, we can't help it. In the sight of God, we're concerned about him, the audience of one, we speak in Christ. (20:40)

Be reconciled to Christ. He's going to say that in chapter 5, that's our message. We're pleading with people to get right with God. And he says it's like that fragrant aroma, we can't be in that office very long before they start to sense we're concerned not only about doing good, we're concerned not only about speaking the truth we're concerned that we draw you by the fragrance of Christ to join our procession, join our team, get in our parade, become a captive for Christ and join this movement called Christianity. That's your job. (21:10)

Salt is known when it's there. You can't ignore it. It's tasty, it will be known like light. It's going to be known, it's going to be seen, like an aroma, you're going to smell it, you can't avoid it. The question is really I suppose when we visit this very simple phrase, salt is good, how good is it in your life? Is it there? Are your deeds influential, do they know you for good deeds? Are your words truthful? Do they know you for standing up for the truth? Or how about this most uncomfortable one, and we've moved from something that may be well received by being the good works person to the person that now people like oh that's kind of scary I don't want to be known as always recruiting people to my cause. Well as people commissioned by God that's what we do. (21:56)

Now in our passage it says salt is good when it's doing its job. But if salt has lost its taste, how is it going to be salty again. Can it have its saltiness restored? That's bad when it loses its taste. Now just to speak within the metaphor for a minute, why in the world would salt, if we're there to influence, why would we stop influencing people? Why would we stop doing good works, speaking the truth or why would we stop recruiting people for our cause? And I don't even need to ask that rhetorical question because you know. Matters of fact it was tucked into verse number 16 right there. We are the fragrance for the latter group, life to life, and they want to know more, tell me more about Christ, I'd like to come to your church. Let me check out your Bible Study, let's go to that thing together. But then to the rest we are the what? We are the fragrance from death to death. That means you stink to people, right? (22:46)

Why would the salty influence of Christianity be stifled, muted? Why would you be tempted to recoil? Well because people think it stinks. They want you to stop. Let's get literal for a second here as uncomfortable as this illustration is. Let's say you came into work stinking literally this week. How would that go in your office? You sat in the bleachers with the other Moms there watching your kid play soccer. Would that go over well? This lady stinks. You're in your cubicle, the guy next to you, oh man, Henry really smells bad. Well I suppose the first day you might get some rolled eyes and people thinking I don't know, must not have showered this morning, forgot the deodorant. By Wednesday they're talking about you, by Friday HR is involved, right? You need to shower, you smell bad. People are going to want to stop that because it's unpleasant to them. Now you can't be a fragrance from life to life to some people and become fishers of men without having the aroma of Christ influencing people around you. By your deeds, by your words and ultimately by recruiting them, calling them to repentance. But you know it's also going to be stink up your office. There will be some people, they don't like it. And so, you need to understand there's going to be pressure for you to not be an influence like that. You know this. You're going to have a pressure, you need to think it through. In your Monday through Friday life there's going to be a pressure for you to stop being so influential. (24:20)

And I thought very carefully through the scripture this week to try and figure out what's the right verb in response to that. When the salt has lost its taste, and I had to think pastorally, why would my congregation want to stop being



salty? Why would they want to stop being influential? Why would they want to stop being known as a Christian? What should they do? Well I think that first word that I printed there for you at the beginning of the second point would be the best biblical response. And not to fight it, because you're not going to fight it. But you should ignore it. Let's put it that way, number 2, you need to ignore the world's pressure to sit down, shut up and stop being so Christian at work. (24:57)

2. Ignore the World's Pressure to Fit In

You need to just ignore it. Now I'm not saying as I said you're not opening up your Bibles at inappropriate times, you're not preaching there in the middle of a board meeting or a conference or you know you're not out there putting flyers on people's windshields in the parking lot. I'm just saying you are not going to stop being an ambassador for Christ. If they're going to bring up issues in the lunchroom that deal with truth, you're going to respond to those things. And all I'm saying is when you do, you'll feel the pressure to not do it because they're going to malign you, they're going to criticize you, they're going to intimidate you. They may even get to the place in our age and our generation where they will persecute you, with real persecution in some way and that may happen and if it does all I'm telling you as the Christian response as I looked through scripture is to ignore it. That's all we can do and that's what we ought to do because we reached a place in our society now that's been codified in particular one phrase from a New York Times op-ed that came out that I think all of our culture has jumped on the bandwagon of saying, "That's it. That's what you Christians should do." And this homosexual writing the op-ed in the New York Times has said this about you Christians, and that is this. You want to believe what you believe and you want to say what you want to say, that's fine. Say it in your pews, say it in your homes and say it in your hearts. You're free to believe whatever you want. And thus, they go out applauding and patting themselves on the back for still maintaining something they think is called religious liberty, religious freedom. You think our founders had that in mind? Oh, that's what it means. You can believe whatever you want, just keep it in your church, keep it in your home. You can read your little Bible there with your kids if you want, but you know what? Keep it in your heart when you're out here at work. When you're in the market place, you know when you're in Main Street, Wall Street we don't want to hear it, we don't want to see any effects of that there. So, you just do that. (26:46)

Now I guarantee that's not what our founders had in mind about the free exercise of our religion. That's not what they had in mind. But even if it were because eventually they're going to say I don't care what the founders meant, this is what you're going to do. You're going to sit down, shut up and be quiet about this Christian thing, that's where we're at, we're there now. And even if they do, what's my response to that? I ignore it, I ignore that. Just like Peter and John in Acts 4 when they called them before the Sanhedrin and they said, "Stop, can you guys shut up about all this?" And they said, "Well, why don't you think this through for a second from our perspective? Does it make any sense that we would listen to you, as threatening as you are, or that we would obey God. Because ultimately as men commissioned by God, we speak with sincerity, we're trying to tell people about Christ. We are not going to stop." Now is there a time and a place at your work to do that? Yes, but you're not going to stop. If you were a zealot about any other issue, I guarantee you, you may not be up there in a board meeting preaching your cause. But if you're a zealot about any issue, that zeal is going to shine through. Through your deeds, through your words and through your recruiting, and that's how you need to live your life. And they're not going to be able to shut us up, and we're not going to sit down, and we're not going to be quiet, and we're not going to fit into the world's mold of what they expect from Christians, they don't cause any trouble. That's something you and I have to get to in our own thinking, that we're going to obey God rather than men. (28:11)

Our Christianity was not meant to be confined to the pew, to the home and to our hearts. It's meant to express itself in everything that we do. How we vote, how we talk, how we write, how we think, the deals that we ink, the deals that we pass on, the jokes that we laugh at, all of this comes down to what God has called followers of Christ to be. And so, we've got to realize that we're not going to be intimidated, as a matter of fact, that's how that passage ends there. When John and Peter were brought in before the Sanhedrin, the council, after they said stop doing this. Here's the next line, after they threatened them, they let them go. They released them. See that's the thing, we're being threatened right now. I'm not trying to be political in this, I'm just trying to respond to the culture that we now live in. They will seek to intimidate you and most weak Christians will respond this way when the culture seeks to intimidate and shut Christians up. You know what the most weak Christians will do? They will now compartmentalize their life just like the op-ed in the New York Times said we should. And they'll say, "Well at my small group here when we all have Bibles open on our lap, well that's where I'll be really Christian. But now at work I'm not going to be. I'm going to compartmentalize my life into the safe secular and the sacred. No, there's

just no option for us in that regard. You cannot be. (29:24)

Let's just think about someone who is a zealot about other things. Let's think about a person who is a zealot to be a vegetarian or worse let's just say a vegan, okay? They're vegan. And nothing animal products, nothing. So, when they go to the supermarket this is how culture thinks they're going to function. We're going to have a little aisle, aisle 5B, we're going to have a section of vegan stuff and all the, you know, Styrofoam you want to eat or whatever they have there, it's there for you, you can have this stuff and you can have it. But when you move out of that aisle and you go down here and you meet the guy, the butcher with the bloody apron and the cleaver in his hand, we want you not only to high five him, give him a big hug. Kiss him on the cheek and say, I'm all for you brother. Because we don't want your zeal about being vegan to really be anywhere seen outside of aisle 3B, just keep it there. See now if you're really passionate about that I'm assuming you're not going to high five and hug the guy who's butchering animals and you don't believe in that. Do you see what I'm saying? And we as Christians are told, listen you can believe whatever you want about sexual ethics just you better high five us over here in the marketplace. You better tell us that you're for us because you have to approve of what we're doing because you can't bring that religion into the secular marketplace now. See this is the thing they're asking us to do. And Peter and John said, "Well, I'm sorry, we can't compartmentalize our Christianity." Jesus didn't say follow me on Thursday nights and on Sunday mornings. You're supposed to follow Christ in all that he does, all that he says and all of the goals that he has for us to be agents of recruiting people for the kingdom. Ignore the world's pressure to fit in, you cannot compartmentalize. (31:07)

Let me take you to another passage that may help you with this. 1 Peter chapter 4, 1 Peter chapter 4. It's a great passage, I know I've taken you here many times in the past, but let's look at it afresh in light of what we're preaching on here about being salt that's not going to be intimidated into being tasteless. Verse 1, 1 Peter chapter 4 verse number 1. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh. Now when he was here, he suffered, why? Well, because he bore witness to the truth, because he lived in stark contrast to the world, because he tried to recruit people to the cause of Christ and righteousness and people didn't like it, they crucified him, they called him of Satan, right? They said the head of the house, he's Beelzebul. Well guess what? They're going to call the members of his household Beelzebul. You know if the persecuted me, he said, they're going to persecute you. No servant is above his master. I suffered in the flesh and so Peter said, "Hey, you guys need to arm yourself, prepare yourself, get ready." Arm yourself with the same way of thinking. And what was the way of thinking Christ had? I don't care if they persecute me, I don't care. That's the ignore part. I ignore it. They want me to fit in? I'm ignoring that. We saw that at the beginning of our chapter, chapter 14. We expect you to do this in our worldly religion, here's what we want. He ignored that. He did the right thing, what the Bible taught, he did it. And so, we arm ourselves with the same way of thinking. We're going to do it. We're going to obey God rather than man. For whoever has suffered in the flesh, right if that's us, we're saying we're willing to take our hits just like Christ did. We'll then we've cease from sin, what's the sin in context here? It's conforming to the world, its being part of what the world expects of me. It's being poured into the mold of what they want. It's being the people who sit down and shut up and don't talk about Christianity. I mean I'm going to stand up for what's right, like Christ stood up for what was right, so I'm going to suffer in the flesh and that's a resolve for me to cease from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. (32:57)

I'm not going to do what's comfortable for me and that's where the passage was in Luke 14. It's not about me, it's not about pleasing my family, my friends, my kids, my mother, my children. It's about counting the cost and following Christ wherever it takes me. For time that is past it suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, I mean they're all about pleasing themselves, they're all about living in sensuality and passions and drunkenness or orgies or drinking parties, lawless idolatry. With respect to this the world that we live in they're surprised, let's get specific, the Monday through Friday life that you're in, they're surprised when you don't join them. In the same flood of debauchery, whatever they're debauchery is, whatever their chosen debauchery is, and because you don't live – look at the next three words – they malign you. They malign you. They mock you, they criticize you. But remember this, they will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living, we know he's our judge, that's how this book started. We have to remember we're going to give an account to God, different kind of judgment but he's also going to judge the dead. Those that are spiritually dead, the people that mock us and malign us, he's the judge for both. Different kind of judgment but I should fear that, I should be concerned about that. (34:08)

That by the way is a perfect complement to what he just said. Scroll back up to verse 13 of chapter 3, he asks this rhetorical question. Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? And that's what we're talking

about this morning. Salt is salty, you can taste it. Christians who are zealous, you're going to know they're there. They're going to do what God asks them to do, they're going to say what is truthful and they're going to recruit people for the cause of the kingdom. That kind of salty, that kind of influential, that kind of flavor, that aroma, that smell of Christianity, who's going to harm you? Well, that's an ultimate question because if God is the one who is going to judge the living and the dead, I guess that's all that really matters. And that's true, that's all that really matters. But there is going to be some suffering, because even if – verse 14 – you should suffer for righteousness sake. We will, we'll be maligned, we'll be mocked, you may even be persecuted in your lifetime for this. But you know what? You will be blessed, God will see you as blessed. God will bless you in that. So, what's our response? Ignore them. Have no fear of them, don't be troubled. Just forget about it, ignore it. But in your hearts, you honor Christ the Lord, he's the king, as holy. You set him apart in your heart. Always prepared to make a defense at your work, in that environment, in the neighborhood, in your cul-de-sac, to everyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that's within you because they see it, they know it, they hear you talk about it. They see you recruiting people for it, yet do it with gentleness and respect. We're not asking you to be a jerk. Having a good conscience so that when you are slandered, and you will be, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good that should be the will of God than for doing evil. (35:50)

Time for us to recognize that though the world is going to intimidate us in this regard. Though they may even persecute us in our day for this. This is something that we cannot concern ourselves with. We've got to concern ourselves with the one who is going to judge the living and the dead. We have to set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts, that's all that really matters. We don't fear the retaliation, we're not afraid, we're going to be courageous, we're going to speak up for what's right. And we're really not going to seek their applause. Have you gotten to that place yet in your Monday through Friday life, that you are not because of your Christianity in a fallen world ever really going to be applauded the way non-Christians will be, never. You just won't. I mean you've given up in your mind of being that ultimate employee of the month in your job. Or being that real industry leader in your industry, in your career. I mean in part, there's going to be barriers because you are not going to stop standing up for the truth, living what is right and trying to recruit people for the king. And that is not going to be an aroma of life for a lot of people. But I'm going to ignore their pressure to fit in. I am as the classic passage says in Romans 12 verse 2, I'm not going to be conformed to the world but I have to continually transform myself by the renewing of the mind, testing so that I may discern what the will of God is. What's good and acceptable and perfect, that's why we spend time in the word and prayer every day so that we can go into the world and not compromise, committed to being an influence for good, and what we do, what we say, and how we go out making disciples of Christ in the sphere of influence God has put us in. (37:26)

Ignore the world's pressure to fit in, just ignore it. Now let's keep on doing what God has asked us to do until we see him face-to-face, because if salt has lost its saltiness it's not good for anything. You can't even use it for the most mundane things you might use sodium chloride for. It's just throw it away, it's no good. And speaking of sodium chloride, the scientific among us, might look at this passage like this, those poor ignorant 1st century people, they don't understand. Sodium chloride is a stable compound, it never loses its saltiness, it can't. Well, listen, you're not a genius, and they're not idiots, okay? In the first century they understood this, they probably know a lot more about salt than you do reading a textbook because they farmed it, they experienced all kinds of things related to the application of sodium chloride. They may not have had all the fancy words that you have but trust me they understood this. Real salt, pure salt does not lose its saltiness. But here's the thing especially when you're out there on the Dead Sea trying to farm all this salt, there's a lot of impurities that can get tangled up in that sodium chloride that can make it inert and useless, because you can't even taste it. And so, the problem with salt is keeping it pure. And that regard a pile of salt may not be salty because it is full of impurities and that makes for great illustration as long as Christ brought it up. Salt is good as long as its salty, if it's not salty what's the problem? Well, it's been invaded by impurities and that makes it tasteless, insipid. (38:53)

That's what we've been dealing with in this chapter, it's called worldliness, it's about things in the world that invade our lives, connections with the world that makes us fond of the world's entertainment, fond of the world's jokes, fond of the world's values, fond of the world's priorities. And then we get to the place where we're not even distinctive in the way we talk, we're not distinctive in the way we act, we do everything everybody else does. We're just like them now. Now I said I'm going to follow Christ but I'm no longer distinctive, why? Because the world has invaded my thinking, the world has invaded my life. And that ain't going to happen without relationships. Really that's the connection, you're going to be connected. Even if it's a one-sided relationship, some kind of idolatry for someone in our culture, you're going to start to reflect their values, you've got to guard your heart against invasion



of what we've been calling throughout this series, worldliness. Why? Well because this text says if you're not salty, here's the words verse 35, it is thrown away. That's the real concern. Let's just say it in a general way, number 3, we need to count the cost of worldliness. (40:02)

3. Count the Cost of Worldliness

How much of the world is in your thinking? How much of the world is in your life? How much of the world is in your home? Think this through now. To that extent you need to recognize what you are living under the threat of in this passage is, God is saying it's time to toss you out. Time to toss you out. Why? Because you're no good anymore, you're not an influence anymore. There's the threat of this passage. I wish we could end on a happier note in this series but that's what Jesus said. And then he said, "Think about it man. He who has ears to hear, you better hear this." (40:30)

Turn with me if you would, this very classic passage that I know you think is written for your Jr High kids but it's written for us too. 2 Corinthians chapter 6, let's turn to this passage, 2 Corinthians chapter 6, this is not a passage about dating, although it applies. This is a passage about people in the marketplace, in the work place, in environments within the first century in Corinth that had a lot of worldly influences and they were told, you guys be careful. To put it in our terms be careful about the influence of the world in your life. Because it's going to come as you kind of get comfortable in connection with people that do not share a commitment to following Christ. They don't want to live like him, they don't want to think like him, they don't want to talk like him and they don't want to recruit people for the kingdom like him, so you need to be careful. Verse 14, don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers. (41:26)

You know what the yoke is? I read this verse for years as a kid, I thought it was about eggs. I didn't understand it. That think that goes over, this big wooden beam over the shoulders of the oxen. And then that loop underneath that would go under the neck. And then these two oxen would pull the plow through the field. The yoking, the taking of these two animals, you don't put a donkey and an ox together. You don't unequally yoke them. You've got to have them going in the same direction with the same strength. Encouraging one another, iron sharpening iron, that's the picture. And he says, listen make sure you're not linked up in a way with someone that's starting to do things like we're going to see described in these words that follow where there's a kind of – here's the word - partnership, where you're trying to partner in your life righteousness with lawlessness. Where you're trying to have, here's a biblical word, koinonia, fellowship with like, I'm for light and he's for darkness but we're kind of connected here in koinonia in some way. What a cord, what harmony does Christ have with this nickname for Satan. Well, they don't seem to get along very well. What portion what sharing does a believer have with an unbeliever. What agreement, what kind of "Yeah we're all about the same things", has the temple of God that's all about God and the temple of idols, that's all about false gods and demons. (42:51)

See the connection here is not about us somehow leaving the world and starting some kind of monastery so that we leave the world. Paul has already addressed that to the Corinthians in his first letter. You'd have to leave the world if that's what I'm talking about, I'm not talking about that. There's something much more profound here about the connection with people in this world where we start to share common values. Where we don't understand our distinctiveness. We're going to rub shoulders with non-Christians for the rest of our lives. You're going to walk through this world in your offices and your workplaces, in your kid's soccer team, in your neighborhood for the rest of your life with non-Christians, but there has to be a distinction here. You have to filter out the values and priorities of these people so that it does not affect who you are as a follower of Christ. (43:35)

He says, because remember, middle of verse 16, you're the temple of the living God. God said I will make my dwelling among them and I will walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be my people, therefore – verse 17 – go out from their midst, and you're saying I thought you said we're not supposed to start monasteries, I'm absolutely telling you that, that's right. This must not be a physical going out from them because we can't. And Paul has already conceded that in the first letter, you are going to have to live in a non-Christian world. What do you mean? Well, keep reading. You've got to be separate from them, there needs to be a distinction between you. The Lord said, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. Now I'm going to be in the midst of them, I'm going to be same company, same neighborhood, same teams, in the same environment, same society but I'm going to not touch the unclean things. I cannot engage in what they approve. I can't go along with what they say. And therefore, as 1 Peter 4 says, I'm going to have to arm myself for that conflict, but I'm ready for it, because if you do that, then I'll

welcome you, God says. Then I'll be a Father to you, then you're going to be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord God Almighty. We'll have this connection with each other and it'll be great. And just like the son could kneel down and pray to the Father and then walk into a hostile situation in front of the chief priests and scribes and stand strong and stand nose to nose with Pilot and stand there and testify to the truth, unabashed, unafraid, with total courage to stand up for what is right. That'll be us. And we will be like sons and daughters of God. And if God promises to draw close to us, verse 1 chapter 7, 2 Corinthians, well then if we have promises like that, man, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God, because I'm going to give an account to him. I call on Father who impartially judges each man's work so I'm going to live the rest of my time here as an alien and stranger in the world trying to make sure I keep my body and my spirit clean from the worldly priorities and standards of this world. (45:43)

Well I really haven't gotten to defining the phrase it is the problem, the cost, of letting that happen. And that is, it's going to be thrown away. What do you mean? God's going to throw me away? Yeah. Well, how? A couple levels, let's start with this one, just jot this down and I'll quote it for you. 2 Timothy chapter 2 verses 19 through 22. Look this one up, it's on the back in the discussion questions in small groups this week. This is a great passage. It's a passage in essence, let me Mike Fabarez paraphrase it for you, it talks about a household with a lot of items in the house, and some are used for honorable things and good things and great things. And some things are used for common things and base things and simple things. And the Bible says, you are one of these vessels in God's house if you're a Christian. And God is going to reach out and utilize these vessels for certain things. He needs some for honorable things and then other things are going to be passed over for those honorable things. And he says you want to be used for honorable things. You want God to reach into – here's the updated Mike Fabarez version if you will – he's going to reach into the tool chest of Christianity. And in our case, it's the tool chest of South Orange County Christians and he's going to open up the drawer and he's going to say I've got something I've got to do in South Orange County. It's an honorable thing and I need to pick a Christian to do that. And he's going to look in that tool chest to find people that are not worldly. Here's how he puts it, verse 21. If anyone would cleanse himself from what is dishonorable then he will be a vessel for honorable use. He will be set apart as holy, he will be useful to the master of the house and he'll be ready for every good work. (47:26)

Now to the extent that you have worldly values and you are not distinctive in your life at your office and in your Monday through Friday life, God is going to open the drawer, he's going to have something important to do in your sphere of influence and he's going to say, "Who in that office can I use to do something great here?" And he's going to open that drawer and he's going to throw you aside and he's going to reach for the Christian that is clean. Who cleanses himself from all the worldly things that are discussed in the passage in the context of 2 Timothy chapter 2. I don't want to be thrown out from usefulness to God because though I say that you may say I'm not really interested in that anyway. That's the scary part I don't want to be used by God I just want to sail through this without making any problems, I don't want to make any waves at work. One hundred years from now you're going to regret that mindset. I guarantee you, one hundred years from now all that will matter to you is how God used you to change the environment he put you in every day. That's what you'll worry about. How were you an agent for godly influence in those places? That's all that will matter. And you're going to look back and say that's what I should have concerned myself with, and the thing that makes the difference between you being used for God in a powerful way in your environment, your sphere of influence is how you cleanse yourself from the worldly influences. (48:38)

One more passage to jot down to move to another level, 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 29 through 32, 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 29 through 32. Here were the Corinthians starting to bring in worldly thinking into their practice and their lives and the Apostle Paul says, "here's the problem, you guys with your worldly mentality about how to go about these things in the church that I told you not to do, you're doing them, therefore, God has stepped in and started to discipline you." And he uses three words to describe these levels of discipline. Some among you because of this lack of discernment about what you should and shouldn't do, some of you are weak – there's the first word – some of you are sick – there's the second word – and some of you have even died in the church at Corinth. Those three levels he says, "You need to think about because God is willing to step in and to throw you away to some extent in terms of your involvement in this life, to the extent that you do not judge yourself." I'll read the verse. In the middle of that passage, 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 31, if we judged ourselves rightly, truly, honestly, sincerely we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord we're being disciplined. So that we may not be condemned with the rest of the world. What were the three words? Weak, sick and died. (49:56)



Now here's the thing, you want to sit there in the tool chest drawer of Compass Bible Church. And you want to sit there and say, "Well, I've got a lot of gunk in my life and a lot of worldliness in my life but that's okay, I'll be okay. God's going to reach over me and grab someone else to do that work in the office or my neighborhood. Whatever, that's fine." You need to understand, when he looks at that tool and it is not useful and you will say, "Well, at least I'm getting to do what I want to do." You won't get to do what you want to do because God's going to say, now I'm going to make you, – here's the first level – weak. What does that mean? Well when you're weak you don't get to do all you want to do. You start doing less of what you want to do. And then sick, that's even worse, now you hardly do anything other than just sit there and nurse your, you know, your sickness. And then guess what? Dead, you don't get to do anything you want to do. You're dead. So, what's God saying? Hey, listen if you don't take seriously my agenda, which with that agenda, comes you being concerned about being godly, and you just want to say well I'll just go about my agenda not your agenda, God will say I'm going to make sure that you're not about your agenda until you get about my agenda and here's the thing, you'll be weak, you may get sick, I may even take your life and throw you away from this life. So, this passage if we are salt and really salt, I'm not saying you're going to lose your salvation, but what I am saying he's going to toss you away and what's the Bible say about that? His discipline certainly tosses us away from not only what he has for us but what we might want to do for ourselves. (51:20)

I reach into that tool chest sometimes you've got a drawer full of screwdrivers I assume. I mean if you're my age you've collected all these screwdrivers, I don't know, I don't throw them away being that I'm preaching on that, but I do look at some that I hardly ever use them. Why? Because they're gummed up and they're goofed up and the handle is all broken whatever, they're just no good anymore. Thrown away. (51:40)

Worldliness in your life can get you thrown away from usefulness. And you don't want to be passed over for that because there's ultimate fulfillment, gratification, reward that you will see compounded in eternity. He can throw you away just from life itself through weakness, sickness and perhaps even the ultimate discipline of God to take you early from this life because you're no good for the kingdom, you're not influential you're not salt that's tasty anymore. (52:02)

The Bible ends this way, he who has ears to hear our passage let him hear. It's easy to think about a hard-hitting sermon and consider someone else's life. You've got to look at a passage like this and take heed to what Jesus says. This illustration about salt, you've got to hear it for yourself. Is this you? How zealous for Christ are you? How fearful have you been in letting the world fit you into its mold? How much have you considered really the cost of you acquiescing and compromising and being more like the world? Are you ready to be like so many in the church of Jesus Christ through the centuries who have been willing to be counted with Christ, who would not be silenced, who end up paying a price that cost them, sometimes it cost them everything? I give you those books all the time talking about the martyrs of the church. I mean that should inspire us to recognize that even if it gets really hostile in our culture against our Christianity we're not going to be quiet. We're not going to stop representing him in our offices, in our workplaces, in our kid's ball teams. We just can't. Are we going to jerks? I didn't say that. Gentleness and respect. Are we going to be inappropriate? I'm not talking about being inappropriate. But I am talking about not being silenced. Being a zealot for Christ. (53:24)

Speaking of salt and popcorn. I love that popcorn, I really do. I eat too much of it probably but I like the popcorn. The only thing I don't like about eating popcorn is when you're done eating popcorn, inevitably there's that little shell part, that little husk, that little they call it a hull of the kernel. That likes to find its way right between my teeth and my gum. So, you eat the popcorn, you might be watching a movie, whatever you're doing. And you spend the next half hour trying to pick that out of your teeth. Why? Because it's irritating. Matters of fact when I'm eating popcorn, when I come home at night after a long day. I'm sitting there eating that popcorn, I'm done, I want to make sure I leave plenty of time to pick those things out of my gums, because I'm not going to bed with those things in my gums. I even have some toothpicks right next to my recliner so I can sit there and dig those things out because I can't stand those things. I'm going to bed having to floss whatever I have to do to get those buggers out of my gums. (54:27)

If only we were that sensitive about the way the world shoves itself into the crevasse of our thinking and our values and our minds. Especially at the end of the day when we're laughing at what the world laughs at, being entertained by the things the world loves to be entertained by, when we're trashing the standards of Christ, we've been silent at work all day about our commitment to Jesus. And there's all that stuff jammed into our hearts and our minds and we just go to bed. God would like us to recognize that if you are not an agent of change in this world and the world is



going to change you. Then eventually you have zero effect on your environment. God says that the salt loses its saltiness what good is it. Can we just be more sensitive to the worldly compromises that are everywhere in our world? If that sounds like old school Christianity I don't care. I mean that is what we need to do, is to think about what is infecting our minds. To rethink what it means to be godly, to recognize that to be godly is to leave every morning to go into this world to say I'm going to make a difference for Christ today by what I do, what I say, and my concern for lost people in my environment. To do that we've got to make sure the world doesn't invade us because we want to be agents of change in this world. Let's pray. (55:55)

God help us please, in a day where we have a lot of pressure, increasing pressure it seems in our generation to sit down and shut up and not cause any waves in our society and certainly not let our Christianity effect what we think, what we say, what we stand for, how we vote, whatever it might be. I pray we could be much more vigilant about what invades our thinking, that we'd be able to filter out these compromises before they lodge in our minds and render us insipid and inert Christians in our environment. God, I pray that this sermon would be adequately convicting but also hopeful that God is going to be Father to the daughter and the son that is willing to step up, be counted with Christ, and see how he or she can make a difference in his or her sphere of influence every week. So, give us courage, give us boldness, give us that biblical optimism that we can be people that make a difference for you if we are willing to not compromise. God for the ways in which we compromise we want to pray for your conviction that we might repent, that we might sense that with adequate shame and turn, that we can be the kinds of people to whom you look as it says in Isaiah 66, the people that are contrite of spirit who tremble at your word. We care about your opinion more than our coworkers or our neighbors. God again I pray there might be the right balance in the reception of this sermon that people might think this is some kind of license to be an irritating person. Let us be filled with shrewdness and grace and diplomacy and yet we cannot fit in, we cannot be poured into the mold that the world expects of us. So, let us stand up for what's right, let us do what is good and let us care about the lost people around us that we might win them to you. There's nothing more important than that. Make these priorities for our lives and support us in this cause I pray. In Jesus Name, Amen (58:00)